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In Personal Contact

THE visit of Prime Minister Macmillan to Moscow for a direct talk with Premier Khrushchev may or may not have all of the results expected. It does, however, take the present stalemate in international accord over the Soviets' attitude concerning Berlin into more open ground. Notes fired across international borders during most of the postwar period have been unproductive. Threats and ultimatums, no matter who indulges in them, are not likely to settle anything in this kind of a world. Recourse to arms under modern weapons, with civilization as the first casualty, would be unthinkable. Only commonsense negotiation is left.

While some gloomy predictions have been voiced about the futility of top-level conferences in the present international atmosphere, there are some things to be said on the brighter side. It is not likely that the Soviets want to push the cold war into a hot one: the results would be fully as disastrous for Russia as for any other participant. It is likely that, while Mr. Khrushchev may play the situation for its worth in propaganda, in the end he will have something to trade. The leader of the British government is neither an appeaser nor a visionary. If his efforts succeed the way would be paved for a formal meeting of the leaders of the four nations concerned in the Berlin settlement, or their foreign ministers.

It should not be forgotten either that Premier Khrushchev must know that while he may enjoy the position of being approached in this fashion, he less than anyone can afford the risk of breaking off relations with the West, coupled with the contingent liability of disaster to his own land. That, in essence, is the end of the line for "brinkmanship" of any nature. Prime Minister Macmillan's visit, therefore, is worth while as a plain invitation to reality.

The Printed Word

IN spite of the advances through radio and television, the daily newspaper remains the workhorse of communications in the world. There is no other single medium which day by day reaches a wider audience with more ability to convey the fluid news of the times. Government would be hamstrung without the operation of the presses and this dissemination of its laws. The entertainment world would fold up overnight. Business, if it wished to leave a surviving record of its intentions, would be reduced to handbills. Industry and commerce in widening fields would be submerged in the welter of rumor, misinformation and misunderstanding which often fill the gap when presses stop rolling.

For its modest price, the daily newspaper gives a return that stands in a class by itself. The world, the nation, the community, the doings of individuals, every essential fact which goes into the continuing round of human society, find their way into the columns of a daily newspaper. And this is so wherever a free press is in operation. The ability to give spot news on microphone or screen, important and useful in its own sphere, is not likely ever to supplant the written record. That can be laid aside, and picked up again hours, days, and years later in precisely the same form. Not all "news" has a message to convey; but it is surprising what a percentage of it does, and to the widest audience.

What can be said of the daily press applies also to the progressive weeklies published in almost every settlement of 2,000 people or more. The weekly paper is scanned by its community on publication, put by to be read at leisure, and fills many a continuing roll for which there is no substitute. Much closer to all individuals than any other medium, a free press remains the guarantee of a free people. Canada, happily, enjoys both.

The T-1 Short Form

THE abbreviated income tax form known as the "T-1 Short" at its inception was a friendly and concise little document, contained in one sheet with printing on two sides. The T-1 Short is still cordial, but in the course of time it has grown into a pamphlet; in twin sets, three sheets and six pages of fine type, and a reading time of three-quarters of an hour. In fact, the T-1 is no longer short.

In its condensation of the Income Tax Act the T-1 Short does a masterly job. It is kind and helpful to the taxpayer where it can be. In at least three places it suggests that help can be obtained by the bewildered at the nearest income tax branch; and Canadians know that this is not a figure of speech. The form still carries encouraging lines which begin: "If it is to your advantage, you may claim either" of two something—although the statute itself sees to it that it is "the lesser" of two somethings which will apply.

The income tax is, no doubt, the fairest form of taxation that has yet been devised. Canada was using its administrative head when it compressed the rules into the original "T-1 Short" to the benefit of citizens. It is for that reason many taxpayers would like to see the T-1 remain short, and certainly not outgrow twin-sets and six pages in very fine type.

Island Editors Say

Ferry Politics

The MLA's in Victoria are enjoying a fine political banquet with the CPR as the main course and for once they are all agreed that the food is excellent.

The issue is supposed to arise from the severing of connections between Victoria and Vancouver.

But, as it happens, the issue also takes the spotlight away from other important issues. It allows the opposition to make fine political ammunition as it talks of the big companies riding roughshod over the little man.

It allows the government to play the role of "saviour of the Island."

But when all these superfluities are brushed aside, there remains the one important point. And that is that the CPR is cancelling a very expensive service which people have proved, by lack of use, that they do not want.

—COMOX DISTRICT FREE PRESS

Subdivisions

While we have already said in the past that we are not in entire agreement with the proposals earlier announced by Central Saanich regarding the control of subdivision in the municipality, we cannot sympathize with the vacillation which has followed the earlier reports. If the council had proceeded with its not too popular plans it would have established a planning project of some ramifications. Today it has established nothing and a change in plans is announced following each discussion of the matter.

With a proposal to completely revamp the map of the district and the restriction of properties to one of two arbitrary sizes, the council has acknowledged the objections voiced to its original plans. It has also evidenced lack of conviction.

We cannot but feel that the picture is unchanged and that a freedom to subdivide, under strict supervision of the health authorities, would yet be the most equitable plan.

—SIDNEY REVIEW

Student Reward

The provincial government's educational scheme to reward students according to marks is, we think, a move in the right direction. We see no reason why diligent students should not be so rewarded.

The argument that all should be treated alike, regardless of whether they are first or second class students, is not in any way a sound one. By rewarding those in the higher marks bracket should be the incentive needed for more of the "average" to climb into the higher bracket.

Student fees and university grants are, we think, two separate issues and should be dealt with accordingly.

—CAMPBELL RIVER COURIER

What Price Pride?

What will be injured by the suspension of the CPR ferry service to Victoria, Victoria's trade or Victoria's pride? Sorting out the facts from the sound and the fury, it would appear that the only serious casualty will be Victoria's pride, and this newspaper is opposed to any government subsidy for any city's pride.

If the whole of the Island were being cut off from the mainland, it would be an entirely different matter. But as it is, the few people who are using the service can travel to Nanaimo by car or bus and take the ferry there. This would cost very little, if any, more and would take little, if any longer in actual hours of traveling time than the present Victoria-Vancouver service takes.

—COURTENAY ARGUS

The British Scene... by Giles

"Your Alfie's measles are certainly very much better since you came in to stay with him, Mrs. B."

London Express Service

Thinking Aloud

". . . of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—of cabbages and kings."

By TOM TAYLOR

I THINK it was Alexander Woolcott who told of the Alpine climbers who lost a companion in a crevasse and many years later went back to recover the body brought down by a glacier. Having forgotten about refrigeration they were astonished to find him still young-looking while they themselves had grown old.

This story was recalled for me by a news item from Los Angeles, a fascinating piece of fantasy even Jules Verne could scarcely have imagined. We may have left the comics behind, as General Pearkes says, but this one surely takes the icicle.

The idea, apparently, is to freeze someone, perhaps a tired man eager to get away from it all, and send him on a journey to a distant star. What he is to do there is not explained, and only adds to the wonder of the thing, especially when it may take him 100 years to get there. The connection with the Alps rests in the intriguing conclusion that when he comes back he will be the same age, to look at anyway.

There is one small initial difficulty, of course. His life processes have somehow to be stopped without killing him for good, which is as simple as explaining why a single tender blade of grass should have the power to push up an asphalt sidewalk. Just where he will get the calories en route to sustain him even in sleep, is something one hopes will not be overlooked. It would be a poor advertisement for this wonderful earth to have a skeleton step ashore on this nebulous and distant star.

It is regrettable in fact that the alternative to frozen sleep should be so summarily dismissed. It is argued that to keep him awake, during the day, I mean, assuming he could tell night from day on the journey—and give him a proper environment would require too big a space-ship, which seems rather niggardly under the circumstances. Surely a man being shot that far deserves to travel de luxe, or at the very least tourist class.

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One cannot help wondering, also, how he is going to come out of this frozen sleep. True enough some kind of automatic warming process is envisaged, but what if he were a poor riser of a morning and didn't hear the alarm. And then, too, after exploring the star and deciding his wife will be missing him by now, supposing he can't start the thingamajig for the return journey. All kinds of mishaps might befall him. Who knows but what he might lose the pills or whatever it is that will refreeze him, for instance. No provision seems to be thought of, either, to give him a decent breakfast when he wakes up, which strikes me as rather parsimonious. He might be ravenously hungry.

There seems little in fact that this lone cowboy of the stars is going to get out of this remarkable journey, except a hundred years' holiday away from the earth. That in itself might be ample reward, only if he is to be asleep most of the time he won't be able to relish his vacation.

When he comes back, of course, he will have that one transcendent virtue—he will still be a young man, having aged only during his brief wake-up period. This is enough perhaps to entice all those seeking the elixir of life, but disappointment will nevertheless await this frozen traveller on his return. No one will know him. All his relatives and friends will have gone, having been unable to wait up for him for a hundred years and more. And by then everyone will be space-hopping by their own wings and his adventure will seem very small potatoes indeed. A pity, for it makes a good story.

Letter From London

The Paradox of Progress

By RICHARD L. THOMAS

THE paradox of the modern world could hardly be more forcefully illustrated than by the usual incidence of unemployment and employment. In the middle of February the official figures for unemployment in the United Kingdom exceeded 500,000, dangerously near to the 3% mark of the working population. The week the announcement was made we had the remarkable experience of reading two full-page advertisements in the English newspapers—one from an education authority beseeching teachers to make their future in Birmingham, and another in which a large English bank begged the youth of the country to make its future in banking.

It all boils down to the fact that there are too many people in the wrong trade or profession—or without any trade or profession; and far too many people unwilling to change their trade or profession.

It is easy to over-simplify the situation. For example, six and seven years ago there were advertisements urging young men to make their future in coal mining. They were told that their future was secure in the most pampered of all nationalized industries. Millions of taxpayers' money were being poured out on modernisation and improved conditions of work.

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Now the recruitment of miners has ceased. Miners are being paid off. Collieries are closing down, and deputations of miners are urging the government to build more coal-fired electricity generating stations and reconvert those converted to oil firing. The gas boards have been criticized for importing natural gas from the United States. It is rather like a deputation of stage-coach drivers urging the government to ban airliners.

We are suffering what has been suffered through history—the agonies of transition, the convulsions of change—and, just as children refuse to be influenced by the experience of their parents, so the world at large refuses to read the lessons of history. We have a surplus of coal miners and a shortage of bank officers, and at the back of it all is some basic weakness in our educational system which seems to be geared more to our yesterdays than to our tomorrows.

For the first time since before the war English firms are discovering that it is possible to hire office boys; for the first time school leavers are finding themselves without jobs. Significantly, however, we are still tremendously short of teachers though—as usual—we have our share of teachers who ought to be anything else. At the back of all our troubles and all the hectic planning of the welfare state there seems to be something radically wrong with our system of education, which seems to produce an ever-increasing stream of uneducated youngsters and training far too many people for the wrong jobs.

* * *

There are other factors. One is the virtual disappearance of the man of leisure, the gentleman who lived on a family fortune and for all his faults and failings usually managed to provide a great deal more than his generally recognized employment quota. Away back in the great depression unemployed men booed the occupant of a Rolls Royce as it drove through Trafalgar Square. The inference was that he should not be riding in luxury whilst they were on the dole. We can sympathise with their emotion but not with their reasoning. What about the skilled craftsmen who made the car? Without the wealthy to patronize them we would never have had the firm which made the engines which won the Battle of Britain. Nor would we have had the miracles of engineering which power Comets and Britannias.

The same gentlemen doubtless employed a domestic staff, private secretaries and indirectly much more employment. Today that kind of gentleman has been taxed out of existence. He has to compete on the employment market instead of giving it. Those who can afford domestic help import Germans and Italians because the average Briton prefers factories and shops. There was a time when the arts were patronized by the wealthy. Today patronage has been transferred to the taxpayer and industry. It is possible that we have become too dependent upon governments with their traditional environment of precedent and tradition and a notorious inability to adapt themselves to changing conditions.

Britain is full of examples of people who refused to be bound by convention and risked their all on new enterprises, and succeeded. Yet somehow our educational system seems to be geared to cope with conformists rather than those inspired by initiative and enterprise.

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Meanwhile we are back again on palliatives. The government eases credit to encourage employment, fiddles with sales tax for the same reason, but with no fundamental effort to get down to the root causes. The problem will become more acute when automation is in full control. It seems that we are not looking far enough. Metaphorically if not factually we are still training telephone operators when we ought to be training more mechanics to look after the complicated equipment which within a decade will enable any telephone subscriber to dial any other subscribers, not only in Britain but in Europe and quite possibly Canada too. We are thinking of ways and means to bolster up our coal industry when we should be accelerating atomic development to a point where it more than absorbs those being displaced by the industries it is displacing.

Time Capsule . . . *By G. E. Mortimore*

Average Man's Car

ALBERT I, King of the Belgians, was killed while mountain-climbing, 25 years ago.

The 58-year-old monarch fell 100 feet to his death on a climb by himself near Namur. He had been acclaimed a hero in 1932 when he saved a party of guides from death on Mount Brenta.

His Honor J. W. Fordham Johnson, lieutenant-governor, opened British Columbia's 18th Legislature. Hon. H. G. Perry was named speaker.

Senator George H. Barnard of Victoria made another attempt to legalize sweepstakes. He moved second reading of the same bill which had passed the Senate on motion of Senator A. D. McRae, only to be defeated in the Commons.

* * *

"A MOTOR Carriage for the Average Man" was advertised in The Daily Colonist for $550, just 50 years ago.

"Complete with Solid Rubber Tires, Chapman Double Ball Bearing Axles, Horn, Wheel Steer and 3 Lamps. The average man needs a motor carriage for business reasons because it will save him time; because he can make more calls, see more people, transact more business, get more pleasure out of life . . .

"The average man — the Doctor, Lawyer, Business Man generally — does not need a $5,000 touring car, on the same principle that the average man could use a road horse, yet would have no use for a 2-minute trotter.

"The average man does need a Motor Carriage that costs no more than a good horse and buggy, and costs less to keep.

"The Tudhope-McIntyre Model HH runs at an average speed of from 8 to 15 miles an hour, although some men drive it at 25 miles an hour—two-minute gait — and others prefer to jog along about 3 miles an hour.

"Two speeds forward, and one reverse. The average cost of running this $550 Motor Carriage is one gallon of gasoline for from 25 to 30 miles of travel."

Questions were being asked in Canada's House of Commons about the escape of train robber Bill Miner from the B.C. Penitentiary. But the answers did not shed much light.

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"HOWEVER unpleasant it may be . . . we have no other alternative to demand the immediate removal of His Honor Chief Justice Cameron," the British Colonist said 100 years ago.

The Colonist remarked the chief justice was an honest judge, but was not a qualified lawyer.

"We have among us a distinguished jurist, in every way competent to carry out the highest judicial duties of our courts of law.

"Contemplating a union of these colonies, we know no more judicious mode of meeting the expectations of this colony than by conferring the Chief Justiceship on His Honor Judge Begbie."

—FROM COLONIST FILES.

The Packsack

Of GREGORY CLARK

THE worst news I have heard in a long time was given me by an electrical appliance salesman whose job is to sell modern kitchen equipment to farmers. He is a farm-to-farm salesman.

"The farm kitchen," he says, "is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. For the past century, indeed ever since pioneer days, the farm kitchen was the living room, the core, the heart of the establishment. The door, the only real door of the house, opened into the kitchen. Only when death struck the farm was the other door, the one around in front, ever opened.

"The kitchen was the biggest and best room in the house. In the middle, a great table, the symbol of the house. Beyond it, beautifully glittering, the massive stove with nickel plate. Rocking chairs with pillows, and cats on them. Huge dressers and sideboards. A clock ticking clear and unabashed. Geraniums in tomato tins in the window sills. A large calendar from an implement company on the wall. Even when empty, the kitchen had a quiet hum in it.

"But it is all over now. You can't have rocking chairs and an electric refrigerator in the same room. The table has been blonded to agree with the electric stove. The TV is in that front room, the parlor, formerly reserved for funerals, and everybody is in there. They use the front door, where the car is parked. They've got an electric clock. It doesn't tick. Nothing hums. It is just a kitchen now."

This is sorrier news than sputniks.